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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: SEPTEMBER 03, 2009

Summary: Reports and photographs of an assassination bid on a Federal Minister in Islamabad dominated front pages in all newspapers on Thursday. Also highlighted were reports that the Lahore High Court "suspended its earlier decision lifting restrictions on the movement of nuclear scientist Dr. Khan." Also prominently displayed by all newspapers were reports that U.S. President Obama hosted a dinner at the White House. His reiteration that "engaging Muslims is one of his fundamental commitments" also received prominent display. The English language daily "The Nation," reported that President Zardari directed the relevant ministries to "prepare a strong case to be put before the U.S. President Obama-headed summit meeting of Friends of Democratic Pakistan" scheduled for later this month in New York.

Most major newspapers ran editorials on the much-debated issue of former military President Musharraf's trial and the Saudis' stepping in to "rescue" him from any prosecution. However, some newspapers editorialized the "audacious attack" on Federal Minister Kazmi the other day. The second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" advised the government to "stop the military operation during Ramadan so that it does not have to face yet another terrorism incident." Whereas, the liberal Urdu daily "Express" propounded that "everyone knows that it is very difficult to break up [terror] outfits as long as their leadership is free." End Summary.

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News Stories  
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"Audacious Attack On Minister In Capital; Driver Killed" "Dawn" (09/03)

"Religious Affairs Minister Hamid Saeed Kazmi was injured in a brazen attack in Islamabad on Wednesday. His driver was killed and a police guard injured. The assailants attacked the minister's car when he was leaving his ministry."

"Order Lifting Curbs On A.Q. Khan Suspended" "Dawn" (09/03)

"The Lahore High Court suspended on Wednesday its earlier decision lifting restrictions on the movement of nuclear scientist Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan."

"U.S. Monitoring The Situation After Dr Khan's Release" "The News" (09/03)

"Expressing concern over the release of Pakistani nuclear scientist Dr. AQ Khan, the U.S. State Department has said that they were monitoring the situation very closely because U.S. still believes that Dr. Khan poses a threat of nuclear proliferation. In a regular press briefing at the State department, Spokesman Ian Kelly said that Pakistani Government was fully aware of the U.S. concerns over this development. He said the United States believes that Dr. A.Q Khan has the potential of nuclear proliferation because of his past activities."

"Obama Hosts Iftar Dinner At White House" "The News" (09/03)

"Stating that all religions of the world call for peace and dignity of human beings, U.S. President Barack Obama has said that it was his fundamental commitment to foster engagement grounded in mutual interest and mutual respect between the United States and Muslims around the world."

"Engaging Muslims A Fundamental Commitment: Obama" "Dawn" (09/03)

"U.S. President Barack Obama has said that engaging Muslims is one of his fundamental commitments and he wants this engagement to be based on mutual interests and mutual respect."

"U.S. Cuts Pak Aid To A Trickle" "The News" (09/03)

"The Obama administration has conveyed to Islamabad that it will provide only \$174 million for the budgetary support during 2009-10 out of \$1.5 billion annual assistance under the Kerry-Lugar bill. But Pakistan is objecting to such preposition because the government will have no direct say in the spending of remaining \$1.326 billion, which will be done by the U.S. with the help of its own institutional mechanism. In an exclusive talk with The News, Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin told this scribe that the government prepared its 2009-10 budget on the assumption of \$500 million budgetary support from the U.S. and if this money was not coming then how would this gap going to be plugged."

"Foreign Ministry, Security Agencies Enter A Row" "The Nation" (09/03)

"A serious row has erupted between Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the country's security agencies over the return of Craig Davis, a Peshawar-based US citizen, believed to be an ex-mercenary of Blackwater, The Nation reliably learnt on Wednesday. According to sources, Craig Davis, who was found involved in illegal activities in Peshawar last month and eventually left Pakistan, has returned again and resumed his mysterious job raising eyebrows of many, including the country's spy agencies. When Foreign Office spokesman was contacted in this regard, he was not available for comments. The sources said that Davis is associated with Creative Associates International, Inc, a Washington based firm operating out from Peshawar, which is suspected to be a wing of the U.S. private security agency, the Blackwater, headed by the U.S. former vice president Dick Cheney."

"Blackwater Starts Providing Security To U.S. Officials" "Business Recorder" (09/03)

"Blackwater World-wide, (new name Xe) has started providing security to U.S. officials in Pakistan particularly in Islamabad and Peshawar and have rented many houses in the federal capital. The private security company Blackwater has started its work in Islamabad and has converted several houses on main Margalla Road into mini-fortresses by erecting sand walls for protection, sources told Business Recorder on Tuesday."

"U.S. Base Being Built At Ghara: Shireen Mazari" "Business Recorder" (09/03)

"Dr.Shirin Mazari spokesperson on foreign affairs, Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf, on Wednesday claimed that a US base is being built at Ghara, Sindh and Washington is putting pressure on Pakistan Navy to give a go ahead to the request."

"16 Militants Killed In Bara" "Dawn" (09/03)

"At least 16 suspected militants were killed and 35 others arrested on the second day of a military operation in Bara tehsil of Khyber Agency on Wednesday. Commander of the operation Brigadier Fayyaz told journalists in Jamrud that security forces had faced stiff resistance in Akkakhel and Kohi localities, but cleared the areas after a clash which left several militants dead."

"Two Militants Killed In Swat" "Dawn" (09/03)

"Two militants were killed in a clash with security forces in Jambail, 27 were arrested and 13 more surrendered before the forces in the Swat valley on Wednesday."

"TNSM Leader Dies In Custody" "The News" (09/03)

"Maulana Rahim Gul, one of the founding leaders of banned Tanzim Nifaz Shariat-e-Muhammadi (TNSM) and a prominent religious scholar, died in the security forces' custody on Wednesday. Maulana Rahim Gul had been picked up by security forces some three weeks ago and was being interrogated in connection with Taliban activities in Shangla district."

"LHC Grants Bail To 11 Jud Activists" "Dawn" (09/03)

"A division bench of the Lahore High Court comprising Chief Justice Khwaja Muhammad Sharif and Justice Ijaz Ahmed Chaudhry on Wednesday allowed bail to 11 Jamatud Dawa activists who had been in jail since the imposition of UN sanctions on the Jamaat."

"Security Forces Kill 16 Taliban, Arrest 25" "Daily Times" (09/03)

"Security forces on Wednesday killed 16 militants and arrested 25 from Bara tehsil of Khyber Agency, officials said. Khyber Agency Political Agent Captain (r) Tariq Hayat Khan and Brigadier Fayyaz, in charge of the military offensive, said security forces had destroyed two explosives-laden vehicles and seized a huge cache of arms and jihadi literature from them."

"U.S. Helicopters Violate Pak Airspace" "The News" (09/03)

"U.S. helicopter gunships violated Pakistan's air space on Wednesday. Tribesmen saw the helicopter obviously belonging to the U.S. army, flying over Landikotal near Torkham in Khyber Agency and then going back to Afghanistan. The Chopper didn't attack any target in the Pakistani territory."

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Editorials/Op-eds  
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"Terrorism Against Allama Hamid Saeed Kazmi," an editorial note in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (09/03)

"The attack on Minister Allama Hamid Saeed Kazmi could be a result of enmity or it could be a target killing attempt. It is also possible that the attack was a reaction of forces action against Lashkar-i-Islam in Kabal, Swat in which 40 extremists were killed.... Allama Hamid Saeed Kazmi had been an open opponent of suicide attacks and other terror activities. The Taliban might have included his name in their hit list.... This is regrettable that our security forces are continuing with their operation in the sacred month of Ramazan while the Taliban had announced a ceasefire in reverence for the month. Resultantly, we saw a suicide attack in Mingora two days ago and this attack on Minister Kazmi. The government should ponder as to what good it is achieving by killing Muslim brothers.... The government should stop the military operation during Ramazan so that it does not have to face yet another terrorism incident."

"Murder Attempt On The Religious Affairs Minister; And The Start Of The Bara Operation," an editorial in liberal Urdu daily "Express" (Cir. 25,000)

"Everyone knows that it is very difficult to break up [terror] outfits as long as their leadership is free. Hence it is important that the leadership of all these groups be apprehended; once this happens, it would only be a matter of days before extremism dies its

own death. It is also important to arrest those who attacked the Religious Affairs Minister; arresting the perpetrators of this crime would also lead to the arrest and elimination of more terrorists."

"Strange Alliance," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (09/03)

"It is a poor reflection on the American strategy that it has failed to equip Pakistan Army with the right type of weapons essential to take on militants in terrains like Swat and Waziristan. Though the U.S. could have greatly helped in the War on Terror, had they ensured that it was equipped with Cobra and Apache helicopters, but somehow they are reluctant to provide them . . . the damage to the civilian life in Swat could have been avoided to a great extent, had the Army been equipped with state-of-the-art weapons used by the U.S. forces just on the other side of the border. As things stand, the Pakistan Army busy in a military operation to root out terror from its soil ought to be backed by the U.S. in terms of provision of modern weapons, particularly Cobra and Apache helicopters."

"U.S. Must Release CSF," an editorial in the country's premier business newspaper, "Business Recorder" (cir. 25,000) (09/03)

"President Asif Ali Zardari exhorted the United States to meet its financial obligations to Pakistan during a meeting with a three-member US congressional delegation. These obligations include the release of 1.6 billion dollars under the Coalition Support Fund (CSF), an early passage of the Kerry-Lugar bill and the passage of legislation to establish reconstruction opportunity zones (ROZs) in Pakistan's war affected areas. The CSF and ROZs are not a part of the Friends of Democratic Pakistan (FoDP) pledges made by the U.S. on 17 April 2009. This newspaper fully endorses the President's plea to the US to release the CSF on an emergent basis, as it will help in meeting the heavy costs of the ongoing military operations that this hapless country is fighting. It must not be overlooked that military action is lowering the incidence of terrorist attacks on the rest of the world in general and the U.S., in particular, by keeping Taliban/al Qaeda, which has openly declared the U.S. as its primary target, engaged militarily in this country."

"Targeting Pakistan And Silencing The Critics," an op-ed by Shireen M Mazari in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (09/03)

"While U.S. diplomats target their critics in Pakistan with a new ferocity, the U.S. media and politicians target the Pakistan's nuclear and military capability. . . Now, once again, this scribe as well as some electronic media hosts all of whom have been exposing the increasing muscle flexing by the growing number of non-diplomatic Americans now in Pakistan (especially Blackwater - now re-christened Xe Worldwide) are being targeted. .Just for the record, whatever has appeared in these columns regarding this group and the dubious Creative Associates International Inc (CAII) has been gleaned from Western media sources including the Deutsche Presse-Agentur (DPA), but then verified from reliable local sources. .Especially with the Blackwater issue refusing to die down in the media despite a strange silence in Parliament and in spite of threats of multiple types from the yet-to-be-expanded U.S. embassy in Islamabad; new revelations are made on a daily basis about U.S. shenanigans in Pakistan. Here in Pakistan it has got to the stage where one is not sure who is an 'official' American and who is not. . . "

"Our American Mess," an op-ed by Ahmed Quraishi in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (09/03)

"The Americans are back to their favorite arm-twisting practice: Diplomacy through calculated media leaks. The New York Times story on alleged Pakistani modifications to old-tech US missiles is a reminder that American interests do not overlap with those of Pakistan's, despite the best efforts of the pro-American lobby within the Pakistani government. This lobby has been quite active recently - through a PR campaign - in defending U.S. position and counseling fellow citizens to stop opposing Washington because Pakistan needs American aid. . . Two things stand out: unwarranted U.S. spying on Pakistan's strategic weaponisation programs and - more importantly - the preposterous U.S. accusation that Pakistan's

defensive capability risks attracting an arms race with India. There is only one explanation for the mounting American frustration: Despite seven years of intense pressures on Pakistan, Washington is nowhere close to putting a leash on the Pakistani military and its intelligence agencies. It does not know yet the exact location of Pakistan's nuclear bombs and warheads. It is no closer to neutralizing Pakistan's nuclear button despite the wild campaign to convince the world that Pakistan was incapable of protecting its weapons. Pakistan managed to deflect pressures and refused to turn itself into a walkway for American and Indian boots."

"The Saudi Card," an editorial in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (09/03)

". . . It is true the Saudis have in the past been good allies. They have come to Pakistan's aid in times of need more than once. But should we allow anyone to act as our masters? Are we not capable of taking the fortunes of our country into our own hands? Perhaps the time has come to ensure that events that take place within the frontiers of Pakistan are determined by our laws, our wishes and by the ordinary people who live within the country and whose fortunes are tied in to political happenings within it."

"Saudi Arabia Must Avoid Defending Musharraf," an editorial in the Karachi-based, pro-Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily "Islam" (cir. 15,000) (09/03)

"It appears that the ongoing high-profile activities in Jeddah would eventually put an end to the political pep talk in Pakistan regarding the trial of former military president Musharraf. According to some analysts it is Washington that is calling all the shots from behind the scenes. They argue that the U.S. does not want to see its former ally becoming a 'bad example' for the new ones to learn from. Saudi rulers must keep in mind that any support for a notorious dictator at this critical juncture may result in irreparable damage to their goodwill in the eyes of the Pakistani masses."

"Saudi Arabia To The Rescue," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (09/03)

"Everyone, however, knows that the Pakistan Army doesn't want to be distracted from its job of fighting the Taliban by a treason case against General Musharraf in which many of its serving and retired officers could be named as accessories. The Saudis, who, more accurately, have a special relationship with the Pakistan Army, also know that it is still the most powerful entity in the country which wishes to remain out of the political melee. Therefore the message from the army, not absorbed inside Pakistan, may be about to be driven home in Saudi Arabia. . . What is going on is politics of revenge all over again. The adding of General Musharraf to the primitive fires burning in the hearts of our leaders will do Pakistan the kind of damage that can't be grasped at this stage. This is the wisdom that is easily understood if you are abroad and not a Pakistani."  
Patterson